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GENTLEMEN of the OPPOSITION:

W H E R E I N

Their PRINCIPLES and their CONDUCT

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I n R E S P E C T t o e a c h O T H E R,

T o t h e i r O W N W E L F A R E,

A N D

T o t h e P U B L I C G O O D.

L O N D O N:

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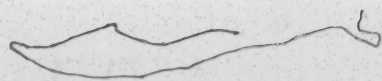
1911

1912

STONY BROOK, N. Y.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE author of the following pamphlet, is a country gentleman, and of a life exceedingly retired ; and from that course, had never read the *Anatomy of a late Negociation*, &c. and he can assure the public, that if he had been so happy as to have sooner read that sensible and spirited performance, he had never troubled them or himself with this publication. Nevertheless, he is so convinced that gratitude to the best of Princes, submission to his Government, and confidence in his administration, are essential to his own happiness, and necessary to the public good, that he feels an uninterrupted satisfaction in seeing these principles maintained by another, with a strength of reason, and urged with a spirit, and a force, greatly superior to any thing he can pretend to : And he supposes, that the worthy author will himself be pleased to see his own sentiments likely to become more general ; and diffusing a cheerful obedience to Government through every order of the State.



TO THE
GENTLEMEN of the OPPOSITION.

WHENEVER I see the principles of men and their conduct so little of a piece, that it is impossible to reconcile them to each other, or either of them to reason and common sense, I conclude that there is something wrong either in the head or in the heart. Now if this should appear to be your case, I should certainly attribute it to the first of these; for having the honour to know many of the Members of the Opposition, I know also, that they are truly animated with a very laudable zeal for the public good; and, as common fame bears the same good testimony to the characters of many others of your body, good manners requires me to believe it. But the misfortune lies here, that most followers of a party pin their faith blindly upon the leaders, and run such lengths as they never once thought of at

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setting out; and, when they come to see the consequences, abhor from their very hearts; and too often repent, when it is too late. I have seen a flock of sheep, without seeing one inch before them, run, and rush, and jump in the same place, and in the same manner over any stick, or over none, just as a few leading bell-wethers of the flock have done before them; and a flock of sheep is very much like an opposition; and most of you will think so too, when the —— comes up to the price of your leaders, and the figure dancers of the party are left alone.

But if the experience you have already had of these men (for most of your leaders if not all have been in power long enough to be known) will be no warning to you, I am sure you will take no warning, though a man were to rise from the dead; and to tell you the truth, I do not desire to rise from the dead to tell you any thing, much less to tell you what I have heard many of you say a hundred times yourselves. And indeed I expect to live many years to laugh at your simplicity, when you have recovered your eye-sight enough to behold the many

absurdities, that these silly engagements have run you into. Let me give you a sample or two of them.

The Set that are just gone off before you, opposed the Government, and the present establishment with all their might and power; and vilified every man that faithfully adhered to them (yet with the gravest and most solemn declarations of disinterestedness) and, believe them, they were the only patriots, nay what was merrier, the best subjects in the world, only they distressed their country as much as they possibly could with their divisions, and loaded their S—— with abuses. But did such shallow pretences pass upon you? nay you called them Jacobites, and persecuted them as enemies equally to the constitution, and the revolution, the present establishment, and the public good; yet you tread in the very same steps, only go much greater lengths in them, (for I think they never went so far as to call their K—— an infamous liar) and yet you boldly call yourselves Whigs. Will you vouchsafe to tell me by what rule in logick, from premises the same, you can draw conclusions altogether different? Nay what is as strange, only if possible,
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still more unjust; call men all the bad names you could think of, for opposing the Government, and then when they oppose it no longer, but do all they can to support it, abuse them for this, just as much, or more, than you did before for the contrary. You may do as you please, but I assure you that neither the intimacy I have had, nor the regard I shall ever retain for many of you; no, nor the bad offices done me by the other side (and surely no man hath more to complain of than I have) shall ever prevail upon me to flatter you, or to be party myself, in a practice equally unjust and uncandid.

“ But the power of the Crown is grown dangerous to our liberties.” I think it would be an affront to your understanding to believe you are serious, when you say it: Last year, (I am sure it is no longer ago, though you seem to have forgot it) a few men of callings no way fitted to make Statesmen, met in one Common Council, and very deliberately sat themselves above the legislature of their Country, and seemed equally astonished and affronted, to find that the K—— payed greater attention to the resolutions of P—— than to their indigested opinion. This is one instance of the dreadful power of

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Government: Another you yourselves supply me with, at the very time you are declaiming about it. For to be sure the power of that Government must be most tremendous, where two or three hundred subjects can meet together, with an avowed design to act in Opposition to it; and can go on to assemble openly for that purpose, and without any let or molestation from that very Government against which they avowedly assemble: With due submission to your superior skill in paradoxes, I should have thought that this had been a proof that the Government we live under, had too little power rather than too much, and wanted some encrease of authority to preserve that order, at least that decency, without which no Government can subsist; nor can this stand long upon such a footing. But I recollect myself, the wine at the Coterie is good, and you are pleased, in your cups, to make merry with the simplicity of your followers; for nothing else, I am sure, can account for the folly of ascribing too much power to the Government we live under. But take care your friends, the mob, do not find out you laugh at them, lest like a wounded elephant they should turn upon their friends, and you should be routed by the very beasts you trained

up yourselves; nay upon which you chiefly depended for the destruction of your enemies.

I own it does one good to hear you upon the chapter of liberty, you say so many pretty things; not that I, or you, or any body else understand what you would be at; but that, with you great orators, is a small matter. I say you yourselves out of compliment, because I observe in speaking of liberty, you speak in terms only applicable to times long since past, though as if you thought them applicable to the present; which you must do either through ignorance or with an intent to deceive others; which last, being the professed end and intent of oratory, may be reasonably supposed, to be the chief end and intent of those who pride themselves upon that talent; though such a design I will not attribute to any of you, till you are pleased to attribute it to yourselves, because I am not perfectly satisfied in my own mind, as to the laudability of the profession of common cheats, or demagogues, as the antients call them. But it is clear that our forefathers, in their idea of liberty, included security for the person and property as essential to it; and it is as clear, that your leaders were never any friends to
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either, but have been, when out of place, as much enemies to the security of the person, as destructive to mens property, when in: What I mean is this, that when out of place, they have incessantly urged the people to despise the Government they lived under, and to set the laws of their Country at defiance; and again, when in power, have spent half the income, and pawned fifteen parts in twenty of the principal of the whole landed interest, in quarrels, in which the landed interest had nothing to do; and what is worse, in quarrels, by which the ruin of the landed interest must be entirely compleated, for the sake of enriching a few individuals who contribute little or nothing to the common expence. In my time, therefore, that is from the political demise of Lord *Orford*, till the natural one of a late King, scarce a year hath gone round without some signal outrage against the personal security of the subject, or without the extinction of his property; and therefore, all your encomiums upon the liberty of those times, is a most stupid cheat upon yourselves, or a very wicked one upon other people; of which alternative, pray take your choice: But for myself and all that belong to me, I do disclaim all such liberty, which can serve no better a purpose

pose than to plunder mens property, and to break their heads. I here crave leave to make a short digression: your most furious demagogue is very emphatically called, and with no small elevation of crest, the minister of the mob; and, I think, very justly, for to them alone he oweth all his importance, and his value, and his price, which hath been a good one. But shall I be bold to ask, by what right or title, or by what property of our constitution, (for which you all profess to have so great a value) the mob are entitled to make or unmake Ministers of State? and when you have answered me that question, I will beg the solution of one difficulty more, by what means the mob become qualified to take upon them so difficult an election, which hath puzzled the wisest and the best of Princes? But I must warn you before-hand, that I will not admit of the vox populi, for the vox dei, in any other sense than of power; in which, I do confess, there is but too much resemblance; for truly it is almost, if not quite as impossible to stop the torrent of a mob, and to make them submit to order and decency, or to listen to the dictates of sobriety and common sense; as to oppose the act of God by any efforts of human power and wit: But to compare the un-

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changeable word of the God of righteousness and truth, to the voice of a lying and foolish multitude, (as all mobs are) I do aver to be a most impious and horrid blasphemy, and worthy only of the devil and his angels. I ask your pardon, for talking of such a disagreeable subject as the devil, before you and the mob; and therefore I will return again to my subject.

I think, I intimated just now, that the liberty of my days had served no other purposes but to despoil the property, or insult the persons of mankind: I now do retract that mistake, which I hope will convince you Gentlemen of the Opposition of my candor; and tempt you, after my example, to own yourselves in the wrong, when you know it. I had really forgot one benefit of the wonderful liberty of my days, I mean the use it has been of to raise the importance, the value, and the price of patriots; as particularly in one I have lately mentioned. But though this trade has been very beneficial to some particulars, I have some fears that it will not be found so beneficial to the public; and I have scarce met with above one man in a million, that was not convinced it would soon be our ruin, at the rate we go on. But whether

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that trade is likely to be put upon a better footing, by the measures you pursue, is worthy to be thought of by you. Now if your numbers increase, (and if you have no hopes of that, where is the use of your opposition) your importance will of course encrease with it; and some of your number (those who are of the most importance) must be bought off at any rate, and you can tell without being conjurers, who is to find the cash: Your leaders then, who are to set the price, and those of your party that have little or nothing to lose, may chance to be gainers by an Opposition; but you that have good fortunes, and noble patrimonies, would do well to look how far you go, before you go too far; and are forced at last to pay the forfeit of your own indiscretion: and were you alone to pay the forfeit, it would be well enough, and all men would laugh heartily; but the misfortune is, that though you may be singular in your folly, millions of innocent and wiser people, must be involved in your punishment.

It is a most provoking thing, to hear you setting yourselves off for friends to the Revolution. Let me tell you, that the inestimable benefits this nation derives from that glorious event, (and the many more it might have derived

rived from it, had that tree of life been cultivated with half the care, or half the skill, or half the honesty of those men that planted it;) deserve the most grateful and respectful acknowledgments from every Englishman; and it ill becomes any man, however great or important he may think himself, to prostitute a word, sacred to every lover of his Country, to purposes of self-interest and corruption. But let my honest Countrymen remember, that it is not every one that sayeth, *Lord! Lord! that shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.* It is not every one that calleth himself a Whig, for reasons equally unknown to himself, and every other man; but he that, like a Whig, acteth a steady and uniform part, for the benefit of his Country. Now call to mind the transactions of the last twenty years, during which time the present Opposition were in power and employment; and all you that, during that time, have found yourselves advantaged, give your vote for the present Opposition as Whigs; and all you that have found yourselves the poorer, and in the worse plight, do you vote against them as no Whigs; and then we shall see what a pitiful figure these new Whigs and Revolution men will make:

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And how much stronger would the shame of these men be, if you were to consider them on the side of propriety and consistency of character, so peculiar to all true Whigs; since, if you except a certain noble Duke, and two or three of his followers, there are not twenty men, in the present Opposition, that hath not been of twenty minds, in twenty parties, in the space of twenty years; what did I say, Twenty years? nay, in twenty months, and I might go on, and say twenty days, were I to confine what I say, to your great demagogue and his disciples. In short, I will take upon me to say, that the christian world hath not suffered more from the unchristian manners of its own members, nor been more scandalized in the eyes of Infidels, than this nation hath in its essential interests, and the Revolution itself, in the opinion of its enemies, by the conduct of Ministers who have professed themselves Whigs, and at the same time acted in direct opposition to the principles of the Revolution; and some of them are now the loudest mouths in your club.

Government by just and equal laws is, if I know any thing, the true principle of good Government, and the
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vital principle of the Revolution. Mark now well what I say: If depopulating one Country to get another uninhabited one: If spending, I know not how many, millions for a smuggler's ears; and twice as many more in a dispute, neither of the disputants had any thing to do with: If crushing down to the very ground, one whole order of the community with a burden too heavy for them to bear, and which they were no way interested, nor could be benefited, by bearing: If loading the chief, the natural interest of the kingdom, with the main burthen of a war, that must inevitably end in their own proper ruin, if it succeeded: If forcing fifteen parts of the community to sell and pawn themselves, and their posterity, to the use and behoof of the other four; and for less than a pepper-corn rent, (for these are the worthy actions, that have marked the annals of your leaders multiform administrations and if these are just and equal, then are your Chiefs good Whigs, and true friends to the Revolution. But if, on the contrary, such measures are neither equal, nor just, nor wise; but impolitic and oppressive, then have they, patrons of such measures, just as much reason to call themselves Whigs, as Lucifer has to call himself a cherubim of Heaven.

I am quite out of humour with these pretenders, because I have been long convinced, that all the divisions amongst us, and all the mischiefs those divisions have begot, have entirely proceeded from the abuse of calling bad things by good names. For the good of the public therefore, I shall in a short time, publish an explanation of certain words which men are eternally differing about, though they are the very words, about which all mankind ought, for their own sakes, to be agreed. Such are the constitution, the laws, revolution principles, liberty, the public good, and such like; and I have no doubt, but I shall make it fully appear, that not any one of these words have been understood, or at least, regarded by any minister or patriot for twenty years last past.

But *apropos*, I have heard that you value yourselves to the public, upon the examples of your ancestors, and the active part they bore in the Revolution. I own this was a good reason for them to boast; but I do not see what sort of merit you derive from their actions: Besides, I must caution you against bringing their example into full light, for fear the public should make comparisons, not much to your credit: And take care you do not fall
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into the error of some physicians of my acquaintance, who wanting the sagacity of *Ratcliff*, ape his manners; and make up in rudeness what they want in skill: And to suppose Opposition is necessary to make you like your ancestors, is a mistake exactly of the same piece. It was the lot, the misfortune of your ancestors, to live in times when the pretensions of the Crown were incompatible with the public welfare; and consequently, an Opposition became unavoidable: But, I think, there are few circumstances of the bloody tragedy of the last century, which a good or wise man, would wish to see revived in this; and I acquit you of any such design, for I believe that very few of you have any views beyond private interest; and those that have not that view, have I dare say, none at all. Yet it is certain, that when men first enter into cabals of this sort, they seldom know before-hand, what lengths they may afterwards be compelled to go: And it is probable, that the patriots of the first *Charles's* days, (even *Cromwell* himself) never thought, at the first, of dipping their hands in the blood of their Sovereign; though a principle of security for themselves, reconciled them afterwards to this last dreadful act: And as little, I suppose, did the discontented nobility

and gentry think that they were raising a storm, in which their fortunes, and powers, and honours, would become the lawful plunder, and themselves the veryest slaves, of the vilest and most contemptible of their fellow citizens; yet when the storm was once raised, it was not to be stopped, till it had swallowed up all that good men thought of value; and though by the Restoration, and a subsequent Revolution of Government, things were not only restored to their former state, but even put upon a far better footing than before; yet men cannot prudently reckon upon examples that, as far as I know, have no parallels in history, and are not to be accounted for upon any principle of human foresight or policy; and really, I think, the virtue of the age I live in will not procure a miracle from God: And yet without one, and a great one too, I can foresee nothing from your Opposition, but an encrease of those mischiefs which almost weigh down your unhappy Country; even provided your disputes go no farther than places or pensions. But should these disputes lead you into others, and you find yourselves, by the starting of new incidents, the art of your leaders, by folly or by fury, forced on to leap over the bounds of duty you have set yourselves, (if perhaps any
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of you have set any bounds to 'yourselves) then the total ruin of your Country must ensue; and you will entail upon yourselves and your posterity, a Government, despotick, and arbitrary. For, besides that the present times are the very reverse of those which compelled your ancestors to struggle with the established Government; (for they fought not for power and wealth, but for their all) there is moreover a strong reason, at *this* time, why you should not oppose the Government, which, at *that* time, did not subsist. I mean twenty thousand idle men, with empty bellies and empty pockets, and little to put into them; who probably would not remain, were both parties contented or desirous that they should remain, quiet spectators of the publick troubles; and indeed it has, at all times, been the fate of a corrupt and luxurious people, as you now are, with a well disciplined army, which you now have, in all civil contentions, to fall under military Government by a train of very natural consequences: For it is natural, that men corrupted in wealth, and enervated by ease and luxury, should yield to the command of those, who are least corrupted and enervated; inured to fatigue and danger; familiar with difficulties, and habituated to see and take all advantages which times of danger and confusion afford; that is, mi-

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litary men : For *they* only, in *other* respects, as corrupt as any, yet by a natural effect of a military life, in *these* respects, remain the longest uncorrupted ; and *therefore*, in the *general* corruption of a State will be, always have been, at last superior. The civil contentions at *Rome*, just before that war, which put an end to the commonwealth, are a proof of what I mean, and an exact picture of our times ; (and by the bye, I wish the gentlemen of la Coterie would have a picture of those times, hung up always before their eyes.) Now you very well know, that while selfish, greedy, ambitious and luxurious, arrogant and effeminate patricians were quarrelling about the public plunder ; and all order and all decency set at nought by a petulant and over-ruling mob ; the legions stepped in, and decided all their quarrels upon terms you are very well acquainted with, and I presume would not find for your advantage to experience ; and though the Government, in great measure, recovered itself under the wise and vigorous administration of *Cæsar*, yet the restless ambition of the chief men, spurred on a few honest, but mistaken, patriots to take away that life, which alone could restore order and tranquillity to the State, already corrupted and broken : And upon his death, it immediately reverted into anarchy, confusion,

proscriptions, and all the dreadful evils of meer military Government; the natural course, as I before told you, of depraved liberty, factious ambition, civil commotions, and military interposition. But if a Government, once split between contending ambition and the sword, could not be kept together by the severe and steady virtue of *Cato*; nor restored by the superior understanding and genius of *Cæsar*; (for they both laboured to restore the Government, one by contending for the antient constitution, though incompatible with the corruption of his times; and the other for a different, perhaps an inferior form, yet such alone as the degeneracy of the times would admit of :) I say, if such men as these sunk under the difficulty, what must become of you, who are certainly, in all respects, greatly inferior to those great and noble Romans? Yet like bold Britons you have invited military men to take part with you, in your quarrels with the Government; and have, very officiously, taken part in one of theirs. I think this compleats your modern system of Revolution principles; and I assure you, without flattery, that I am perfectly astonished at your wisdom, consistency, foresight.

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